

# TOWN OF TERRY

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March 5, 2014

### **Letter – Expression of Interest VIA ECFS**

Chairman Thomas Wheeler  
Commissioner Mignon Clyburn  
Commissioner Jessica Rosenworcel  
Commissioner Ajit Pai  
Commissioner Michael O'Rielly  
Jonathan Chambers  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th Street, SW 20024  
Washington, DC

### **Re: Expression of Interest – Rural Broadband Experiments Connect America Fund, WC Docket No. 10-90**

Dear Chairman Wheeler, Commissioners, and Mr. Chambers,

This letter is to express the Town of Terry's interest in participating in the Rural Broadband Experiments announced at the January 30<sup>th</sup> FCC Open Meeting. While we do not have a project to propose, we take this opportunity to document the Town's need for high-speed Internet service. We respectfully ask the Federal Communications Commission to consider our area's need when making decisions regarding the Rural Broadband Trials and any future initiatives related to the Connect America Fund.

#### **Background**

The Town of Terry is an older, established community located off of Interstate Route 55 at the far southern tip of Hinds County. It is about 15 miles south of the state capitol (Jackson, MS). We are a small, largely blue collar community (2010 Census lists Terry as having 1,063 persons). The racial make-up of our community is almost evenly distributed with about 55% black and 45% white. Although relatively small, the 2010 Census represents a 60% percent growth since 2000. South Hinds County is experiencing significant growth outward from Jackson, and all indications is that this growth is headed toward the Town of Terry. Having state-of-the-art technology will better accommodate the anticipated increase in population and economic growth. Because an increasing number of educational programs are available online, having a more current Internet system could enhance academic programs available at the local high school, facilitate students having access to complete assignments at home and at school. Having greater broadband capabilities will enhance the online services available through our local library.

#### **Geographic Territory**

The Town covers a geographic area of about 3.5 miles long and about 3 miles wide. Using almost every demographic, the Town of Terry is a significantly underserved community. Although some broadband is available, it is not available in all parts of Town. Sadly, we still have populations in the northeast and southwest portions especially that still have to rely on phone dial-up to access the Internet. Universal broadband access is definitely a need in our Town.

#### **Proposed technology**

##### **Downtown:**

We would like to see Wi-Fi be universally available in our small Downtown area. Having this technology would be a service to the business owners as well as those who patronize these businesses. This could also be a catalyst to encourage other small businesses to set up in our Downtown area.

#### Local Parks:

We have two (2) local parks. Having Wi-Fi and better broadband in our local parks would encourage patronage. I envision young parents working on their I-pads while simultaneously casting a watchful eye on the kids while they play. Young people could accomplish online assignments and just walk over to the basketball court to play basketball.

#### Medical Facilities

More and more, the medical community is going online similar to other businesses. Having enhanced broadband technology would allow greater access to online information and records by medical professionals. It could also be a factor among several to attract medical facilities such as MEA Medical Center. It could be a tool that links medical facilities to both online and local pharmacies in prescribing medications, etc.

As we are a small working class community, I do feel that a cost between \$25 and \$50/month per household for these services would be something that a majority of our community would embrace.

#### Existing Providers

The only broadband provider is DSL through AT&T only. And even that service is not yet available in northeast and southwest edges of Town. Satellite services such as DirecTV and the Dish Network are available; however, neither offer Internet or broadband services.

Currently, the Town has no cable provider. Our previous cable provider refused to offer Internet or access to HBO; therefore, the Town ended its agreement with that cable provider. We have three new subdivisions in Town where cable services simply are not available. U-Verse cable service is not universally available throughout our Town.

In order to meet the existing and anticipated future needs of the Town, our goal is to have a minimum speed of 1 megabits per second (Mbps) and preferably as near to 4 Mbps as we could get.

#### Local or Tribal Government Participation

N/A

#### List of Anchor Institutions

Schools: Terry High School – Grades 9 through 12 with approximately 1,100 total students

Libraries: Terry Public Library

Healthcare: Terry Family Medical Clinic

City offices: Terry City Hall & Courthouse; Terry Public Works & Fire Station

Community Centers: Terry Community Center. (Presently, no electronic, phone, or Internet capabilities are available at our existing community Center. However, please note that plans are underway to construct a new Community Center-Emergency Shelter in approximately the same location on Cunningham Avenue.)

Thank you for considering our Expression of Interest in your decisions about the amount of funding that will be allocated in the Rural Broadband Experiments. We commend the FCC in this effort to connect rural communities and are ready to help you close the digital divide.

Sincerely,



RODERICK T. NICHOLSON  
MAYOR  
TOWN OF TERRY, MS